

Summary of Act II of Hamlet
Summary of Act Two

Scene I

At the start of Act II, Polonius is speaking with his servant Reynaldo, who is ordered to follow Laertes and report back his findings. Polonius disguises Reynaldo's purpose by sending him to France with letters and money to give to Laertes. As most any parent Polonius is spying on his son to ensure that he stays out of trouble. He insights Reynaldo about the most cunning of ways to which he could spy on Laertes. All of his conversation with the servant contrasts the morals he has taught to his son, but he feels that his actions are for his own good.

Ophelia enters the scene in a most frightened state. She immediately tells her father of the recent encounter she has with Prince Hamlet. Hamlet has approached her in a very disordered state. He grabbed her and stared in a strange manner for a very long time but says nothing. Polonius now thinks the Hamlet has a crazed love for his daughter and is taking action to put it to a halt.

Scene II

The scene moves to the castle where Polonius along with others are acknowledging the return of the ambassadors from Norway. People have since noticed the unusual behavior of Hamlet, therefore Claudius called upon them to help discover the source of Hamlet's lunacy. Polonius is eager to tell the king the origin of Hamlet's strange. In his eyes, Hamlet's love for his daughter has caused Hamlet to go insane. He proves this through Hamlet's love letters. The queen thinks otherwise still convinced that the source is the death of King Hamlet and the rapid marriage of herself and Claudius.

Polonius exits and Hamlet enters to greet his childhood friends. They converse about Hamlet's new feeling of being trapped in Denmark. They continue the conversation further to find out why Hamlet feels that way. Hamlet is please that they came to visit but is slightly uneasy at the thought that they were sent but the King and Queen. He feels betrayed by his friends and family.

Polonius devises a plan to prove to the King that Hamlet's actions are inspired by his lust for Ophelia. He will send his daughter in the sight of Hamlet, hide and wait for Hamlet's actions to prove his theory correct to the King.

Hamlet later is introduced to the players and mocks Polonius's attempt to find out the cause for his change in disposition. Hamlet cunningly works toward getting the players to reenact the death of his father, as told to him by the ghost, to try and spark a reaction from Claudius.